Met Office

January 2008

The averaging period used for the following assessment was 1961-1990.

UK overview

Mean temperatures ranging from 1 °C above average across parts of northern Scotland to over 3 °C above average across the Midlands and East Anglia. It was the 4th warmest January for England in the areal series back to 1914. Rainfall generally well above the average with parts of northern England and southern Scotland having over 250% of their average rainfall. Wettest January for the Scotland E climate area and 2nd wettest for Northern Ireland, in the areal series back to 1914. Sunshine generally below average across western areas of the UK, but above average across some south-eastern areas of the UK.

Preston Wynne (Herefordshire) recorded a maximum temperature of 15.2 °C on 20th. Braemar (Aberdeenshire) recorded a minimum temperature of -11.3 °C on 12th. 113.4 mm of rainfall was recorded at Ysbyty-Ifan (Gwynnedd) on 19th. Balmoral (Aberdeenshire) recorded 24 cm of lying snow at 0900 UTC on 4th. A wind gust of 90 mph was recorded at Needles Old Battery (Isle of Wight) on 31st.

England diary of highlights

Mostly mild but unsettled. A short cold snap during the first week, and a drier spell towards the end of the month. Some stations in northern England had a record wet January.

1st to 4th: A relatively mild start with southerly winds, mostly cloudy skies and some rain in the north. Winds soon turned easterly however bringing much colder air to all areas and with fairly frequent wintry showers over north-eastern areas on the 3rd, with maximum temperatures generally only reaching a few degrees above freezing. The snow was heavy enough to cause some traffic disruption in Northumberland for a time. Milder air spread from the west later on the 4th with strengthening southerly winds giving gales over exposed parts.

5th to 24th: A series of low pressure areas and associated fronts crossed from the west through this period, bringing showers or longer periods of rain and occasional strong winds, with severe gales at times in exposed parts. The 11th was a particularly wet day over southern parts, with over 25 mm of rainfall in places. There were some drier days between weather systems however, with lighter winds. A few night frosts occurred but generally it was fairly mild, exceptionally so in the period 17th to 20th in the south, with some sites setting new record high January minimum temperature on the night of the 18/19th. Preston Wynne (Herefordshire) recorded a maximum temperature of 15.2 °C on the 20th. It was very wet across northern areas on the 21st, with over 40 mm of rain in places (snow over the Pennines), resulting in some localised flooding. Some stations in northern England recorded over 10 cm of level snow on the 21st, with Alston Springhouse Park (Cumbria) recording a minimum temperature of -6.3 °C on 22nd.

25th to 31st: A ridge of higher pressure extended north from France early in this period bringing several days of fine and dry weather for most although with some cool nights and overnight fog. There were some very strong gusts of wind, over 70 m.p.h. to the lee of the Pennines on the 25th. A band of rain moved south-east on the 29th, with further heavy rain and severe gales in places on the 31st.

Wales diary of highlights

Generally mild and unsettled. A brief cold snap during the first week and a drier spell towards the end of the month.

1st to 4th: A relatively mild start to the month with southerly winds and mostly cloudy skies. Winds soon turned easterly, however, bringing much colder air to all parts with a few snow flurries. Alwen (Conwy) recorded a minimum temperature of -4.2 °C overnight on the 2nd/3rd and daytime (09-21 UTC) maximum temperatures on the 3rd were generally only a few degrees above freezing and reaching only -1.2 °C at Lake Vyrnwy (Powys). Some stations in N Wales recording between 5 and 10 cm of snow lying at 0900 UTC on the 4th. Milder air spread from the west later on the 4th with strengthening southerly winds and some gusts over 60 m.p.h. over exposed parts.

5th to 24th: A series of low pressure areas and associated fronts crossed from the west through this period bringing showers or longer periods of rain and strong or gale-force winds at times. There were some drier days between weather systems, however, with lighter winds. A very wet spell on the 8th and 9th, especially over the northern hills, with Capel Curig (Conwy) recording a 24-hour rainfall total of 95.8 mm on the 9th. A further very wet period from the 17th to the 21st, with enhanced rainfall again in the north, and Capel Curig recording over 200 mm of rainfall through this period. Localised flooding occurred. A few night frosts occurred but generally it was very mild both by day and at night. Hawarden Airport (Flintshire) recorded a maximum temperature of 15.1 °C on the 23rd.

25th to 31st: A ridge of higher pressure extended north from France early in this period bringing several days of fine and dry weather for most although with some cool nights. A band of rain moved south-east on the 29th, with further heavy rain and severe gales in places on the 31st. Aberdarron (Gwynedd), Lake Vyrnwy and Capel Curig, all recording gusts over 75 m.p.h. on the 31st.

Scotland diary of highlights

Very unsettled. Wettest January on record for the Scotland E climate area, with Edinburgh also having record rainfall.

The 1st brought generally cloudy skies and outbreaks of rain to many areas, with local fog patches for the east coast and the central belt. South-easterly winds were close to gale force in the Northern Isles. The 2nd was rather cloudy and windy with occasional rain or showers, mainly in the east, these turning to snow over the hills. A bitterly cold day on the 3rd with fresh or strong south-east winds. Sleet and snow showers in the east (some significant falls in places), extended to many areas during the evening. Snow, with rain on coasts, cleared during the morning of the 4th across much of the country, with further rain, preceded by snow on higher ground, spreading north-east during the afternoon and evening. Balmoral (Aberdeenshire) recording 24 cm of snow lying at 0900 UTC on the 4th. A windy period with severe gales in Shetland, with gusts peaking at 81 m.p.h. early on the 5th, before easing. Elsewhere on the 5th, frequent and prolonged showers affected the west, with a few reaching eastern parts.

The 6th saw scattered showers (with hill snow) across the west, but mainly dry with sunshine in the east, before outbreaks of rain (hill snow) spread east across the south during the evening. Rain, sleet and hill snow continued across the south through the early hours of the 7th and spread up along the east coasts, where rain fell onto frozen surfaces for a time, before clearing around mid-morning. Brighter conditions with occasional heavy showers (with hill snow) affected the north-west, then spread to most places through the morning, although some eastern parts stayed dry with a frost returning in the evening. Fine at first on the 8th, but cloud, rain, sleet and snow spread in from the west through the afternoon/evening. Winds increased during the day, with a gust of 84 m.p.h. at Machrihanish (Argyll & Bute) at midnight. The 9th was a fairly stormy day with winds gusting to 70 to 80 m.p.h. in many places, although easing later, as a front brought a mixture of rain sleet or snow to most parts during the day. The 10th started clear and frosty in the north but rain, locally heavy, in the south pushed north through the day, falling as snow over the hills, and for a time on low ground in parts of Stirlingshire and Perthshire.

The 11th was many dry with some sunshine though a few showers affected the north and west, while fog patches developed in parts of the south. Overnight showers in the south-west left some icy conditions on the

12th, with temperatures falling to -11.3 °C at Braemar (Aberdeenshire). Otherwise the 12th was mainly dry with sunny spells and patchy fog, but cloud increased bringing rain to the south-west, this turning to snow as it spread into Argyll in the evening. Rain, occasionally heavy, reached all parts by the morning of the 13th with Tyndrum (Highlands) recording 43 mm of rainfall. The 14th saw further bands of rain moving north across Scotland with some drier, brighter weather in between. The 15th was generally rather cloudy with outbreaks of rain or showers, turning increasingly wintry over the hills, although a more persistent band of rain arrived in the southwest later.

The rain in the south-west cleared away through the morning of the 16th, to leave southern and western parts dry with sunny spells, with wintry showers affecting northern and eastern areas. The showers gradually died out through the evening with a widespread frost developing. Overnight rain, with some snow over higher ground, cleared to showers on both the 17th and 18th. The 18th saw gales or severe gales developing, gusting to 69 m.p.h. at Rosehearty (Aberdeenshire). Much of the 19th was dry with some sunshine, although the far north and north-west saw showers, and outbreaks of rain reached the south-west in the evening. Southern Scotland was cloudy on the 20th with patchy light rain. Showers affected the north-west but it was dry with sunny spells in the north-east. The 21st was mainly dry and bright in the north. Rain affected the Central Lowlands southwards, with significant snowfall on higher ground of southern Scotland. A widespread frost overnight on the 22nd lifted as cloud increased from the west. Patchy light rain through the morning became more persistent during the afternoon, with milder conditions gradually spreading north-east.

A mild day on the 23rd, with temperatures reaching 15.0 °C at Girvan (South Ayrshire), but generally a rather cloudy day with outbreaks of rain, heaviest and most persistent across western parts, with some sunny spells in the east. Clear, colder but showery conditions edging south-east through the evening, with strong to gale force south-westerly winds, gusts to 65 m.p.h. at South Uist (Outer Hebrides). A much colder day on the 24th with sunshine and wintry showers, these heaviest in Argyll and Highland, with 6 cm of snow at Aviemore. Severe gales developed during the evening, with rain, heavy in the north and west. A very wet day on the 25th with several stations in the West Highlands recording more than 75 mm, although very little reached some sheltered north-eastern areas (including Aberdeen). Gales were severe for a time with gusts to 86 m.p.h. at Sella Ness in Shetland. Showers, wintry in the north, eased for a time on the 26th, then more rain spread from the south, preceded by hill snow. The rain being particularly heavy across the West Highlands, where over 63 mm fell at Kinlochewe (Highlands). Windy with gales, locally severe in Shetland and the Central Belt.

Cloudy and mild, with rain and drizzle across the Highlands on the 27th, but some sunny spells in the east. Mainly dry and rather cloudy on the 28th, but heavier rain reached the north and west during the evening. The 29th saw a band of rain straddle much of central and southern Scotland, with showers further north. The rain moved away to the south in the afternoon, but the showers merged into longer spells of rain across the north for a time (some snow on the hills). Scattered showers and sunny or clear spells on the 30th, the showers most frequent in the north and west and merging at times to give longer spells of rain, especially during the evening. Severe south-westerly gales, gusts 70 m.p.h. at South Uist, affected the north-west during the evening. Heavy rain cleared south-eastwards around dawn on the 31st, to leave wintry showers and sunny spells, the showers most frequent in the north-west. The showers merged later in the day to give western parts a longer spell of rain. Very windy with widespread gales or severe gale force winds, with Machrihanish recording a gust of 83 m.p.h.

Northern Ireland diary of highlights

Very unsettled, and 2nd wettest January (in a series back to 1914) for the country.

The 1st was rather cloudy with patchy rain or drizzle, but it was mild with temperatures in Belfast reaching 11 °C. The 2nd was mainly dry and rather cloudy, with winds becoming a strong south-easterly. Lough Navar Forest (County Fermanagh) recorded a minimum temperature of -6.4 °C overnight on the 2nd/3rd. A cold and bright day on the 3rd, with temperatures only reaching around 3 °C in many areas. Sleet and snow showers developed on the east coast during the afternoon and extended well inland during the evening, pushed on by

fresh easterly winds. Slow moving snow showers continued to affect parts of Down, Armagh and Antrim through the early hours of the 4th with reports of around 15 cm of level snow in the Belfast area. Later in the day, rain, preceded by a short period of sleet and snow, crossed all parts. This was followed by clearer, showery weather during the evening. The 5th was a showery day with showers heaviest in the north and west, and gales along the north coast.

The 6th was largely dry with plenty of sunshine around, but cold through daylight hours. Outbreaks of heavy rain, sleet and snow spread east through the evening, most persistent in the south. Overnight rain, sleet and hill snow on the 7th cleared around dawn, to leave sunny spells and scattered showers (snow on hills). A fairly cloudy day on the 8th, with rain, heavy at times in the afternoon. It was also windy too, with Ballykelly (Londonderry) reporting a gust of 77 m.p.h. Winds eased on the 9th to leave sunny intervals and blustery showers, with more general rain in the evening. The rain lasted into the morning of the 10th, with sunny spells developing and scattered heavy showers in the west.

Mainly dry on the 11th with sunny spells, although the north saw a few showers during the evening. However, there was a frost early and late, with some patchy fog in places. A bright and locally frosty start on the 12th, but with cloud and rain spreading from the south-west. Katesbridge (Down) recovered from an overnight low of -6 °C to reach a mild 9 °C in the evening. The morning of the 13th was cloudy and mild, with rain, heavy at times, especially in the east, but becoming drier through the afternoon. The 14th was mostly cloudy with outbreaks of rain. The 15th was rather cloudy with a band of occasionally heavy rain pushing north-east through the late morning and afternoon. The rain became persistent and slow moving across Antrim during the evening, with Ballypatrick Forest (Antrim) recording 39 mm of rain, while the rest of the country became mainly dry. A further 24 mm of rain fell at Ballypatrick Forest through the early hours of the 16th, but the rain became lighter and patchier as it moved back south through the morning, to leave the rest of the day with sunny or clear spells.

Rain spread east on the 17th before clearing to showers. The 18th was mild with outbreaks of rain or showers, with temperatures widely reaching 13 °C and Murlough (County Down) recording a temperature of 14.5 °C. The 19th was mainly dry and bright, although cloud and rain developed through the evening. The 20th was mostly cloudy with patchy rain during the morning, then drier during the afternoon, before rain returned to the west later. The 21st was cloudy with rain, heavy at times, with Ballypatrick Forest recording 44 mm. The rain turned to snow on hills before clearing during the afternoon. A slight frost at first on the 22nd, but cloud and patchy light rain spread east through the morning, becoming more persistent and occasionally heavy during the afternoon. Mild again on the 23rd, with Killowen (County Down) recording 14.4 °C. It was rather cloudy with outbreaks of rain before clearer, colder conditions with showers spread south-east through the evening.

A much colder day on the 24th with sunshine and scattered showers, wintry on high ground. Back to very mild weather on the 25th, with 12.5 °C recorded at Hillsborough (County Down), but windy with gales in the north. It was mainly dry on the 26th, 27th and 28th, although rain reached the west during the evening of the 28th. The rain, heavy at times, moved east during the morning of the 29th before clearing to sunny intervals and scattered showers through the afternoon. The 30th saw sunny or clear spells and scattered showers, although more persistent rain, spread south-east during the evening. Occasionally heavy overnight rain cleared by dawn, to leave the 31st with sunny or clear spells and wintry showers. The west or south-westerly winds reached gale or severe gale force at times, with Ballykelly reporting a gust of 70 m.p.h

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